

March 9, 2010

Contact: Catherine Ribeiro (202) 225-8020

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, Congressman John F. Tierney (D-MA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, issued the following statement about a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that examined U.S. counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan going back to 2005. The report's findings reinforce the need to continue oversight of the policies and implementation of U.S. counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan. A number of the issues raised in the report surfaced at a March 3, 2010 Subcommittee oversight Hearing, during which government witnesses, including the White House Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, testified about national security threats from transnational drug trafficking throughout the world.

"I am very concerned by the lack of effective performance measures to assess the overall impact of our counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan after tax payers have spent over \$2 billion dollars since 2005 to curb the production, consumption and trafficking of opium poppies. We can't know how well we are doing if we are not accurately measuring performance and setting realistic objectives. Additionally, I am dismayed that so little progress has come in our efforts to help the Afghan government reform its justice system to arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate major drug traffickers. In the long run, the Afghans themselves, not the U.S., must be in the lead and held accountable for counternarcotics efforts."

Afghanistan produces over 90% of the world's opium poppy. There is ample evidence that drug money from heroin fuels the Taliban insurgency, corrodes Afghan government and civic institutions, and undermines citizen confidence in the ability of President Karzai to rid his country of corruption. The GAO report tracks the ever-changing U.S. approach to counternarcotics in Afghanistan and notes that while some progress has been made to monitor and evaluate the program's success, the GAO was "unable to fully assess the extent of progress due to a lack of performance measures and interim performance targets." The report also points out the serious drug-addiction problems faced by the nascent Afghan National Police and notes that "no specific drug demand reduction programs currently exists that focus on Afghan police, who are a central component of the counternarcotics and counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan."

A link to the GAO report can be found [here](#) and additional information about the Subcommittee's March 3 hearing can be found [here](#).

[her](#)  
e